



Civil Rights and Human Dignity

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April 5, 2011

The Honorable George Miller
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller:

On behalf of the Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law— the nation's leading legal-advocacy organization representing children and adults with mental disabilities— I would like to offer our strong support for the Keeping Student's Safe Act.

Research shows that restraint and seclusion practices are ineffective, often abusive, and potentially deadly. Use of these techniques is particularly prevalent among children with disabilities, including those with a mental disorder. While children are currently protected against inappropriate physical restraint and seclusion in other settings (hospitals, health facilities and non-medical community-based facilities), similar federal protections are yet in place at schools.

We share your goal of preventing the use of restraint and seclusion, and are pleased the legislation fosters the adoption of school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS); a proven, positive approach to supporting students who experience challenging behaviors in school settings. School-wide PBIS is an effective, evidence-based approach to promoting a learning-friendly school climate that is beneficial for students, their parents, and school staff alike. School-wide PBS significantly reduces discipline problems and addresses the social and emotional needs of all students, while providing school personnel with the tools necessary to aid students who demonstrate frequent behavior problems.

We applaud you for your ongoing leadership on this important issue, and look forward to working with you and your staff to secure its swift enactment.

Sincerely,

Laurel Stine

Director, Federal Relations